

THE *FAERIE QUEENE* AND THE MARY
STUART CONTROVERSY

A PORTION OF
SPENSER AND THE LITERATURE OF THE
ELIZABETHAN SUCCESSION

A STUDY IN HISTORICAL ALLEGORY

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1935

BY
KERBY NEILL

BALTIMORE

1935

THE *FAERIE QUEENE* AND THE MARY STUART CONTROVERSY

A PORTION OF

SPENSER AND THE LITERATURE OF THE
ELIZABETHAN SUCCESSION

A STUDY IN HISTORICAL ALLEGORY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1935

BY

KERBY NEILL

Reprinted from *ELH, A Journal of English Literary History*, Vol. II, No. 2,
October, 1935.]

BALTIMORE

1935



CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION

PREFACE

CHAPTER I.

ELIZABETH'S ACCESSION.

1. The Lack of an Established Principle of Succession.
2. The Question of Elizabeth's Legitimacy.
3. The Rival Claimants.
4. Elizabeth's Accession.

CHAPTER II.

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF *Gorboduc*.

1. Parliament and the Queen's Marriage.
2. Elizabeth and Mary Stuart.
3. The English Claimants. Catherine Grey.
4. The Winter of 1561-2.

CHAPTER III.

THE POLITICAL INTERPRETATION OF *Gorboduc*

1. Previous Interpretations.
2. The Theme of Good Counsel.
3. The Evils of Division.
4. The Significance of Act V.
5. The Purpose of the Play.
6. Conclusion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DISCORD OVER THE SUCCESSION, 1562-68.

1. Parliament and the Crisis of 1563.
2. The Beginning of the Battle of the Books.
3. The Alarm in England and the Darnley Marriage.
4. The Tempest in the Parliament of 1566.
5. The Fall of Mary Stuart.
6. Conclusion.

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS.

1. Plot and Rebellion.

2. The Battle of the Books.
3. The National Alarm.
4. The Labyrinth of Treason.
5. The Execution of Mary and the Renewed
Battle of the Books.
6. Conclusion.

CHAPTER VI.

MARY STUART IN THE *Faerie Queene*.

1. Previous Interpretations.
2. Duessa in Book I.
3. Duessa in Books IV and V.
4. The Political Philosophy of Book II.
5. Mary Stuart as Acrasia.
6. The Political Allusions of Book II.
7. Radigund and the Regiment of Women.

CONCLUSION.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

VITA.

SPENSER AND THE LITERATURE OF THE ELIZABETHAN SUCCESSION

SUMMARY

The lack of an established principle on which to base the succession to the English throne was augmented by the peculiar situation which existed at the death of Mary Tudor. Henry VIII had further complicated the subject by his various marriages, annullments, divorces, Acts of Succession, and finally by his attempt to fix the succession in his will. As a result, Elizabeth's legitimacy was a difficult problem in both canon and civil law. The descendants of Henry VIII's two sisters took advantage of this confusion and asserted their own respective titles to the throne. Elizabeth came to the throne on a wave of popular feeling, but Parliament quickly petitioned her to marry in order to remove all future doubt about the succession. While Mary Stuart was making every effort to have Elizabeth recognize her title to the succession, a number of the Protestant nobles formed a plot which resulted in the marriage of Catherine Grey, of the House of Suffolk, to the Earl of Hertford. The Queen had the marriage annulled, but soon afterward Lady Lennox began rather openly to plan a marriage between her son and Mary Stewart. Elizabeth summoned the Lennox family to court, and invited the disaffected nobles who might participate in the scheme to spend Christmas with her in order that she might watch them more closely. During this holiday season, so politically tense, *Gorboduc* was presented before the Queen.

Previous interpretations of the political meaning of this play have been either incomplete or erroneous. The purpose of the play was to urge Elizabeth to settle the uncertainty about the succession. It points out the horrible results that follow when the sovereign neglects to heed the good advice of his councilors. In its insistence on the havoc wrought by division within the country, the play is almost a paraphrase of some of the speeches delivered in Parliament. In the fifth act there is a thinly veiled argument in favor of having Lady Catherine Grey named as Elizabeth's heir. The moral basis for the tragedy is in the transgression against nature (i. e. the law of primogeniture), but the

political purpose is to fix the succession on the descendant of a younger daughter. The form is out of keeping with the allegorical content. The play shows the existing confusion with regard to constitutional and hereditary right.

From the time of *Gorboduc* until the death of Mary Stuart, the country was in almost continual excitement over the uncertain succession. Elizabeth nearly died of the small-pox and the ensuing Parliament in 1563 attempted to force her either to marry or to declare an heir or both. The controversy over the validity of the various titles of the rival claimants began to appear in books and pamphlets. The marriage of Mary Stuart and Lord Darnley gave new cause for alarm, and in the Parliament of 1566 there was open hostility towards Elizabeth's policy. Tudor despotism silenced the Parliament, and the fall of Mary Stuart altered the entire situation. During the long years of her captivity in England, she was the center of numerous plots of varying magnitude. The question of her succession was now openly the religious issue, and it resulted in a long pamphlet controversy. When Mary was finally executed numerous pamphlets attacking Elizabeth appeared, and her supporters attempted to answer the charges against her. Spenser's allusions to Mary Stuart in the *Faerie Queene* are a part of this controversy.

It is difficult to find specific evidence in Book I of the *Faerie Queene*, but in Books IV and V Duessa seems to be a definite characterization of Mary Stuart. Contemporary interpretations of the virtue of temperance indicate its political application, and apart from a general similarity of characterization there are a number of contemporary allusions to Mary Stuart as Circe. Spenser's reader, therefore, would probably expect to find an allusion to Mary in the character of Acrasia. In Book V Spenser gives his views of the succession in the allegory of Britomart's dream in Isis Church, and in her conquest of Radigund he comments on the question of female rule, of the current issues of the day, and an issue with direct application to the question of Mary Stuart's claim to the succession.

(NOTE: The section given below is a summary of the written controversy over the succession plus section 3 of Chapter VI.)



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

THE FAERIE QUEENE AND THE MARY STUART CONTROVERSY

By KERBY NEILL

Commentators have been liberal in suggesting that in many of the female characters in the *Faerie Queene* Spenser was alluding to Mary Stuart, but the question of his attitude toward the problem of Mary has never been treated as a whole nor has it been related to its strict historical background.¹ Until after her death, Mary Stuart's claim to the succession, with its attendant larger issues, furnished one of the most important problems which faced Elizabeth's government, and around the events of her career, so rich in calamity, there grew up a whole body of writings which reflected the conflicting public sentiment. By supplementing these occasional poems and pamphlets with the private correspondence and public records of the period, it is possible to re-create one aspect of Spenser's environment and to approximate certain common mental associations of his public. If cautiously applied, this material furnishes a firm basis for the interpretation of a part of the political allegory of the *Faerie Queene*. When allowances have been made for irresponsible commentary, only three characters in the *Faerie Queene* remain as possibly important allusions to Mary Stuart: Duessa, Acrasia, and Radigund. My purpose here is to sketch in the background and main phases of the battle of the books that was waged over Mary Stuart and to relate this material to the appearance of Duessa in Books 4 and 5 of the *Faerie Queene*. Later articles on the interpretation of Acrasia and Radigund will complete this study.

¹ See the interpretations of the allegory in John Upton, ed. *The Faerie Queene*, London, 1758, 1. xxxi-xxxii; "C," "The Faerie Queen Unveiled," NQ, ser. 3, 4 (1863). 66; Frank Howard, *Ibid.*, 150-1; Philo M. Buck, Jr., "On the Political Allegory in the *Faerie Queene*," *Nebraska Studies* 11 (1911). Nos. 1-2; Lilian Winstanley, ed. Book I, Cambridge, 1915, pp. vii-xliii; Book II, Cambridge, 1914, pp. lxxii-lxxix. For a criticism of this "pattern school," see Edwin Greenlaw, *Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory*, Baltimore, 1932, pp. 59-83; and the *Variorum Edition*, Baltimore, 1932, 1. 460; 2. 403.

I

Until the death of Mary Stuart, the succession seemed to the Elizabethans the most important national problem. For nearly thirty years the country lived under the shadow of doubt and the fear of civil war, confiscated property, and religious persecution. There was the ordinary question of a changed party at court with the ensuing reversals among the fortunes of the nobility, but there was fear also of an unwelcome foreign alliance if Mary Stuart should come to the throne with French or Spanish assistance. But the most vital issue was religious. The Protestants feared a Catholic successor, and the Catholics feared a continuance of the Protestant regime. The choice of the next sovereign was a great enough problem, but when the dictation of the consciences of the country was to be in his hands, it became an awful responsibility. The attitude of serious Englishmen toward the succession is well expressed in a letter to Elizabeth by one of her peers who was unable to attend the Parliament of 1563:

Itt is the greatest matter that ever I or anie man alive at this daie can remember hathe been brought in deliberation in our daies . . .²

The question was made doubly pressing by the possibility of Elizabeth's early death.³ Added to the ordinary hazards of life were the prophecies of the conjurers that Elizabeth would reign only a short time or that she would die within a year.⁴ The history of Elizabeth's Parliaments, as well as the personal letters of her ministers,⁵ amply witness the alarm that was felt over the important problem of the succession.

² *Egerton Papers*, ed. J. P. Collier, Camden Society 12, p. 35.

³ For a modern discussion of Elizabeth's physical ills, see Frederic Chamberlain, *The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth*, N. Y., 1922, pp. 97-103. For a contemporary view of her supposedly near escapes from death, see George Carleton, *A Thankful Remembrance*, 3rd ed., London, 1627.

⁴ Bills against sorcerers who made such prophecies were brought up in Parliament in 1559, 1562, and 1581. The Pole Brothers said that they had based their plot on a prophecy of Elizabeth's death, and Bishop Jewel preached a sermon against the conjurors before the Queen. See *C. S. P.*, Eliz. Span., 1. 17, 374; John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, London, 1725, 1. 8, 366-74.

⁵ See Henry Ellis, *Original Letters*, 2nd. ser., London, 1828, 2. 285; Thomas Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and her Times*, London, 1828, 1. 181, 184.

Although there were many contributing factors, the root of the matter was the lack of an established principle on which to base the succession to the throne.⁶ It was an open question whether the monarchy was elective or hereditary, and the usual compromise was to make it both. Although opinion differed at various times, in Elizabeth's day the general view seemed to be that, *except for impediments*, the nearest in blood had the best right to parliamentary recognition.⁷ There were one or two impediments alleged against every claimant to the throne, and a large part of the battle of books on the subject was taken up by the question of the validity and application of these impediments.⁸ With regard to Elizabeth there was the question of her doubtful legitimacy⁹ which remained a delicate matter throughout the first twenty-eight years of her reign.¹⁰

⁶ For the history of the question see John (Lord) Somers, *A Brief History of the Succession to the Crown of England*, London, 1689; (George Harbin), *The Hereditary Right to the Crown of England Asserted*, London, 1713; Alfred Bailey, *The Succession to the English Crown*, London, 1879.

⁷ At the coronation of Edward VI, however, Cranmer asserted the divine right of kings and repudiated popular election and ecclesiastical claims of deposition.

⁸ For a brief summary of the situation just before Elizabeth's accession see *C. S. P.*, Venetian 6, Pt. 2, 1076-8. The main questions were the application of the law of alien birth to the inheritance of the crown, the validity of Henry VIII's will (which was missing during Elizabeth's reign), the legitimacy of nearly all the claimants but especially the Suffolk heirs, the rule of women, and the religious issue (not often openly stated).

⁹ Although the Pope made no pronouncement against Elizabeth during the early part of her reign (see *English Historical Review* 15. 324-7 for the refutation of Sarpi's story), Catholic Europe never recognized Ann Boleyn's union with Henry VIII as lawful. From the point of view of English law the children of an annulled marriage, even when it was contracted *bona fide*, were not legitimate. (See the contemporary discussion in Strype, *Annals* 2, Appendix 8, p. 19.) Henry VIII's second Act of Succession declared that his marriage with Ann Boleyn was null and void and that Mary and Elizabeth were both illegitimate. Mary had had an act passed during her reign annulling her mother's divorce and establishing her own legitimacy, but at the same time this act invalidated the marriage with Ann Boleyn, so that in effect Elizabeth had two acts of Parliament which legally branded her as illegitimate. For the contemporary attitude toward this difficult legal problem see Camden, *The History of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. 1688, p. 18. Even Henry VIII's last Act of Succession which restored Elizabeth to her inheritance left the crown to her with conditions and made her subsequent to any daughter that might be born him and Katherine Parr or any future wife.

¹⁰ See *C. S. P.*, Venetian 6, Pt. 2, 1058-9; Sir Simonds D'Ewes, *The Journals of all the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, London, 1682, p. 52; *C. S. P.*, Eliz., Span., 1. 133, 136, 594-6. See Elizabeth's own comments in George Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, London, 1690, p. 155.

Deeply embedded in the English mind was the fear of civil discord,¹¹ and throughout Elizabeth's reign it was nearly always associated with the thought of the unsettled succession. One of Elizabeth's nobles expressed the view that "the greatest trouble, yea and almost the onely trouble" within the realm from the time of the Norman Conquest was due to the disputes over the succession.¹² In his opinion any tampering with the matter resulted in civil war. In 1566 there was talk of uprisings over the unsettled succession,¹³ and after the Northern Rebellion, Northumberland tried to excuse himself on the grounds that the "realm would be in a hurly burly" because of this same question.¹⁴ The Wars of the Roses furnished an ominous tradition, and it was hinted that such controversies would be raised again if the matter was not settled.¹⁵ Elizabeth persistently resisted all efforts to settle the question, and throughout her reign it remained like a smouldering fire which threatened to break into a major conflagration.

Mary Stuart seemed to be the source of this threatened discord.¹⁶ Shortly after Elizabeth's accession, she had had the arms of England quartered with her own, and beneath the device verses had been added which styled her as Queen of Scotland, France, and England.¹⁷ Although she soon abandoned such undiplomatic measures, for the next twenty-five years there were concrete manifestations that she was a threat to English peace. On the average of about once every three years, the English public was forcefully reminded of this fact. The English invaded Scotland and drove out the French forces

¹¹ Greenlaw, *Studies*, p. 9.

¹² *Egerton Papers*, p. 36.

¹³ *C. S. P., Eliz., Span.*, 1. 574.

¹⁴ *C. S. P., Domestic*, 1566-79, Addenda, p. 406.

¹⁵ See John Hales, *A Declaration of the Succession of the Crowne Imperial of England* (1563), printed in Harbin, *Hereditary Right*, Appendix 7, p. xx; and *Leycester's Commonwealth* (1584), ed. Burgoyne, London, 1904, p. 157. The idea is also found in the Parliamentary petitions to the Queen, in *Gorboduc*, and in numerous other places.

¹⁶ The Study is not concerned with the truth or falsity of the disputes over Mary, but with the expressed attitude of the Protestant English party.

¹⁷ Haynes and Murdin, *Collection of Papers Relating to Cecil, Lord Burghley* 1. 277-8; Strype, *Annals* 1. 8-9; *C. S. P., Eliz., Span.*, 1. 133. Before Elizabeth's accession Mary Stuart's title had been advanced in preference to hers. See *C. S. P., Venetian*, 6, Pt. 2, 1076.

of the Regent from fear of Mary; the "rebellion" of the Pole brothers centered around her;¹⁸ the dissensions between Elizabeth and Parliament in 1566, the stormiest session of her reign, were due to the consolidation of the Scotch title to the succession through Mary's marriage to Darnley; the Northern Rebellion was raised to put Mary on the English throne; and the Norfolk Conspiracy involved most of the nobility and resulted in the execution of the ranking nobleman of the realm. Contemporary comment on these events, often in halting verse, recognized Mary Stuart as the prime source of civil discord.¹⁹ Real of fancied plots for the release of Mary and the assassination of Elizabeth were discovered also during the long years of her captivity, so that in 1582 when Lord Burghley drew up one of his elaborate papers on the many dangers that threatened the state, he described the Queen of Scots as "the instrument whereby the perils do grow."²⁰ This is a common opinion found in many of the controversial books and pamphlets written from 1569 until after her death.

II

There were four stages to the battle of the books over Mary Stuart. The original issue was her right to succeed Elizabeth. The first major work²¹ was a small pamphlet by John Hales, a clerk of the Hanaper Court, written in support of the title of Lady Catherine Grey. This work, *A Declaration of the Crowne Imperial of England* (1563), attempts to establish the Suffolk title by advancing strong arguments for the validity of the will of Henry VIII,²² and by the negative method of attacking the claims of the other aspirants. He excludes Mary Stuart from the succession on the ground that she was alien born.²³

¹⁸ For the contemporary importance of this small incident see George Carleton, *A Thankful Remembrance*, pp. 10-11. Elizabeth's ministers realized it was unimportant, but they made use of it for political reasons.

¹⁹ See Elizabeth's own poem in Strype, *Annals* 2, 89; and also 1. 595-6.

²⁰ *Hatfield MSS* 13. 288-9.

²¹ Possibly *Gorboduc* should be included among these books. I have a detailed political interpretation of the play in preparation.

²² There was a question of whether the will was properly signed, and the document itself was either lost or hidden at that time.

²³ The accounts of this book in the *DNB* (art. Hales) and in A. F. Pollard,

Thomas Morgan, a Welsh Catholic, but at the time probably secretary to the Calvinistic Archbishop of York, completed an answer to Hales in 1565, entitled *Allegations in the behalf of the high and mighty Princess, the Lady Mary, now Queen of Scots, against the opinions and books set forth in the part and favour of Lady Catherine [Grey] and the rest of the issues of the French Queen*,²⁴ touching the succession of the Crown.²⁵ Apart from the title page, Mary Stuart's name is not even mentioned, the first part of the book being devoted to charges of bastardy against the entire Suffolk line, and the second part to an attack on the validity of the will of Henry VIII. Before the end of the year, an answer was published entitled *Allegations against the Surmised Title of the Quene of Scots and the favorers of the same*. The purpose of this pamphlet, which contains an attack on the title of Lady Lennox,²⁶ was to weaken the claims of the Scottish line which had recently been consolidated by the marriage of Mary Stuart and Darnley.

This first phase of the battle of the books, which even in its worst moments raked up old scandals because of possible legal application, after Mary Stuart's fall merged into the second phase, which was mainly concerned with the question of her guilt. The real issue was whether or not her supposed misdeeds furnished an irremediable impediment to the sovereignty of

History of England (1547-1603), London, 1929, p. 255, are misleading. See the pamphlet itself in Harbin, *Hereditary Right*, Appendix No. 7, pp. xx ff. and the contemporary comment in *MS Lansd.*, No. 102, art. 49 (cited Ellis, *Original Letters*, 2nd. ser. 2. 285); and in *C. S. P.*, Eliz., Span., 1. 424, 427. Hales did argue in favor of the validity of the marriage of Lady Catherine Grey and the Earl of Herford (*Camden, Hist.*, p. 59; Ellis, *loc. cit.*), but he does not touch on the marriage in this book.

²⁴ The French Queen refers to Mary Tudor, the younger sister of Henry VIII. She married Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and was the source of the Suffolk title to the crown.

²⁵ The book is listed in *C. S. P.*, Dom., 1547-80, p. 286. It was not printed until 1690, at which time it appeared, with a separate title page, as part of the appendix to William Atwood's *Fundamental Constitution of the British Government*, London. No author is indicated, but in the catalogues of the British Museum and the Library of Congress it is ascribed to Morgan. See the account in John Scott, *A Bibliography of the Works Relating to Mary Stuart, 1544-1700*, Publications of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, 1896, 2, No. 285.

²⁶ According to James Anderson, *Collections Relating to the History of Mary Queen of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1727, 1. p. ii of the editor's preface to the *Defence of the Honor*. . . . See Scott, *Bibliography*, No. 37, and facsimiles 6 and 7.

Scotland and England; ²⁷ but most of the books on the question were not primarily concerned with political theory but were devoted to a practical form of mud-slinging which was intended to discredit Mary Stuart with the people. When the Norfolk match was being discussed in 1569, a bitter attack on Mary was published anonymously.²⁸ It was entitled *A Discourse touching the pretended Match betwene the Duke of Norfolke and the Queene of Scotland*, and it debated the question of whether or not Mary Stuart would be more dangerous to Elizabeth and "the Gospel" if she married Norfolk rather than a foreigner. Because of Mary's reputation and Norfolk's inferiority to her, the author concludes that the match is not for love but "must needs taste of Ambition, of all other the most dangerous Fruit," and a foreign husband would be preferable.²⁹ To Mary Stuart's adherents the attitude taken by the author of this book was very offensive.

With the new hope offered to Mary by the proposed match with Norfolk, it became especially desirable to reply to the attacks on her title and to clear her character of the charges made by Murray and his party at the various conferences at York, Westminster, and Hampton Court. When the *Discourse* expressed in printed form the conviction that these accusations were true, it furnished the last straw, and the Bishop of Ross went to Elizabeth and complained of it and the other libels "dispersed secretly in the Night, both in London Streets, in the Court of *England*, and other Publike Places, without Name or Author, to justifie the same."³⁰ His answer to all these attacks on his Queen was divided into three parts, each of which is indicated in the title, *A Defence of the Honour of the right highe, mighty and noble Princesse Marie Queene of Scotlande and Dowager of France, with a Declaration as well of her Right, Title and Intereste to the Succession of the Crown of Englande, as that the Regimente of Women is conformable to*

²⁷ Buchanan faced the issue squarely in his *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, but his general theory was out of keeping with Tudor despotism, and the book was banned in England in 1584. See Camden, *History*, p. 301.

²⁸ It was probably inspired by Cecil, since a manuscript copy was sent to Randolph, the Ambassador to Scotland. See Scott, *Bibl.*, p. 20.

²⁹ Anderson 1. 21-31.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 1, *Defence of the Honor etc.*, p. iv.

the Lawe of God and Nature.³¹ The first part is an attempt to clear Mary of the charges preferred against her at the various conferences. The Scottish lords are accused of murdering Darnley, the Casket Letters are rejected as forgeries, and her marriage to Bothwell is excused on the grounds that it was made at the request of her nobles. The English nobles are said to have found her innocent and to have acknowledged her as the true heir apparent to the English throne. The second part, which is a detailed answer to Hales's *Declaration*, rejects the application of the law of alien birth to the crown and strongly asserts her title. The third part is a vindication of the rule of women, and it was probably directly inspired by the talk in Parliament about the exclusion of women from the succession.³² The second edition of this book, printed in 1571 at Liege under the pseudonym "Morgan Philips," professes to be an entirely new work containing three original treatises. The preface is much fuller in the defense of her honor, and in the second part she is treated as the true heir to the throne *to the exclusion of Elizabeth*. By deriving her lineage from before the conquest, the right of all the intervening kings of England is impaired. The succession is based on a "universal law" that transcends the law of England, and by implication, the judge of this law is the Pope. All the passages in the first edition that mention Elizabeth with respect are carefully suppressed. This edition, probably a late attempt to further the Northern Rebellion, represents the third phase of the battle of the books, and it is indicative of the last desperate attempt to secure the throne for Mary after the failure of the Norfolk match. It gave great offense to the English and was mentioned in Parliament and at the Norfolk trial.³³ In 1580 Latin editions of the second and third parts of this work were published under the author's name at Liege. In 1584 the second part was translated into English again.³⁴ In this latter work James's title is linked with his mother's, and there is a genealogy of all the other

³¹ See the account of the difficulties of the printing of this book in Scott, *Bibl.*, pp. 20-22; and Anderson 1, pp. i-iv of the editor's preface to the *Defence*.

³² See *C. S. P., Eliz.*, Span., 1. 315. The question of female rule will be discussed more fully in a later study on Radigund.

³³ Anderson 1, pp. vi, xiv-xv of the editor's preface to the *Defence*.

³⁴ See Scott, *Bibl.*, Nos. 115, 116, 123.

claimants. The familiar themes that were associated with the succession appear in all these treatises, such as the attacks on ambition as an uncontrollable vice and the fear of a renewed War of the Roses, but his appeal to pity and chivalry introduces a new note. It is pitiful to see one oppressed who "is not only a Queene by Birth and Parentage, but a desolate Widowe, deprived and expelled from her royal State and Dignitie." And he follows this with an appeal to the national ideals:

And verily, if the famous *Arthur* of *England* were now living againe, (if al be not fabulous that is read and written of him) how abashed would he be of the great Change of his People and Nation. . . .³⁵

Possibly Spenser answered this appeal to the chivalry of his country in Book 1 of the *Faerie Queene*.³⁶

The bitterest and most widely circulated of the attacks on Mary was the *Detectio*, which was written partly by George Buchanan. It had circulated in manuscript at the time of the various conferences, but the first printed version was the Latin edition printed in London in 1571. It was translated into "handsome Scottish" the same year. The title indicates the subject matter, *Ane Detection of the doings of Marie Quene of Scottes, touchand the Murder of hir husband, and hir Conspiracy, adulterie, and pretended marriage with the Erle of Bothwell*. This book, which was dedicated to Elizabeth, gives Mary Stuart an unspeakable character, prints the Casket Letters, and advances all the available scandals, both old and new, to prove her criminal nature. She is described as an intemperate woman who loved without bridle and hated without limit, Cruelty, poison, murder, lust, and relentless ambition are her supposed portion. The translated version adds some verses at the end that eloquently declare the real purpose of the book: to ruin Mary's prospects for the throne.

Now judge, Englishmen, if it be gud to change Qhenis. . . .³⁷

This book was practically a government attempt to discredit

³⁵ Anderson 1, pp. vii-viii of the *Defence* (1571 edition).

³⁶ Canto 13, stanzas 26-8.

³⁷ See Scott, *Bibl.*, No. 76. Anderson, vol. 2, reprints the Scottish edition of 1572.

Mary Stuart completely. In her complaint to the French Ambassador, she ascribed it to Buchanan, but the second part was written by Thomas Wilson, the master of Requests,³⁸ who enclosed the volume in a letter to Cecil, which gave an account of a confession obtained from the Bishop of Ross under severe pressure and which purported to confirm the impression created by the book. In the letter Mary is described as an habitual murderess, having killed her three husbands, beginning with Francis II.³⁹ In 1572 three more editions appeared, one in London, one in Scotland, and one in France which contained an extra supplement, probably supplied by Cecil.⁴⁰ The same year an attempt to give greater credit to the *Detectio* was published at London. This pamphlet, *The Copie of a Letter written by One in London to his Frend concerning the Credit of the late published Detection of the doying of the Ladie Mary of Scotland*, was, supposedly an answer to certain people of "popish affection" who had declared that the *Detectio* was not true. The author's purpose was to prevent the denial of these "Truthes" from seducing "English Subiectes to the underminyng of thee Estate, Honor, and noble Procedyng of our most gracious Sovereigne, and diverting of Affections to undue Places, and to the Great Perill of both Realmes."⁴¹ This small pamphlet seems to indicate that the *Detectio* was not as widely accepted as its instigators had hoped.

Since the *Detectio* contained all of the charges made against Mary Stuart at the various conferences after her fall,⁴² the reply to it was already contained in the Bishop of Ross's *Defence*, but in 1572 the French edition was answered by a little book, *L'Innocence de la tres illustre tres-chaste, et debonnaire Princesse, Madame Marie Royne d'Escosse*. According to Scott, if the author was a Frenchman, he must have been in

³⁸ According to Laing. See Scott, *Bibl.*, No. 75.

³⁹ Murdin 2. 57.

⁴⁰ The French version bore an Edinburgh imprint, but it was probably printed at La Rochelle. In 1579 it was reprinted in *Memoires de l'Estat de France sous Charles Neufiesme*, ed. Simon Goulart. See Scott, *Bibl.*, No. 82.

⁴¹ Anderson 2. 266. According to Goodall (*An Examination of the Letters said to be written by Mary Queen of Scots*, Edinburgh, 1754, 2. 375), the letter was written and published by Cecil, but Scott (*Bibl.*, No. 84) suggests that it was by Buchanan himself.

⁴² It was probably circulated in MSS at that time.

very close touch with someone who had an intimate knowledge of affairs in Scotland. Only the first part of the book is an answer to the *Detectio*; the introduction and the third part are translated from an earlier English tract, also printed abroad and which contains a bitter attack on Cecil and Nicholas Bacon. The former is designated as Synon, and a list of the people destroyed by him and his associates includes Rizzio and Darnley. He is accused of wishing to destroy Elizabeth, as well as Mary and James, in order to settle the Suffolk line on the throne. The author attempts to "tye this bel about the Catte's necke."⁴³ Fugitive and suppressed books such as these found little circulation in comparison with the London printed attacks on Mary sponsored by Cecil, but they indicate the opinions of the Stuart faction, a group which was the more to be feared because its numbers and strength were unknown.

The second and third phases of the battle of the books, which overlapped chronologically, were occupied respectively by the question of her character and the assertion of her title in preference to Elizabeth's. The fourth phase was concerned with the religious issue: Was Mary cruelly martyred for her Catholicism or was she justly executed for treason after Elizabeth had kept her for merciful years from the hand of justice? There were numerous preliminaries to the final tragedy. After a period of hope and comparative quiet, the discovery of a plan by Don John to invade England and marry Mary Stuart caused Elizabeth to make overtures to France and to become more violently Protestant at home. The keynote of the bitterness of the religious persecution of the eighties is given by a passage in John Stubbs, *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf whereinto England is like to be swallowed by another French Marriage*:

She has already cost vs ynough of our English blood, and she cares not though she make hauock of nobilitye & people: she seeks her owne turne by hooke or crooke. Aboue all the dangers of her Maiestie I wold she had one that might euery day cry vvith a loud VOYCE TAKE HEED OH ELIZABETH AND BEWARE OF SCOTTISH MARY. The Lord her God defend her from hyr popish enemies.⁴⁴

⁴³ See *L'Innocence* etc., "Au Lecteur," and Scott, *Bibl.*, pp. 28-9.

⁴⁴ Cited by Scott, *Bibl.*, p. 38.

The seminary priests were considered as provocative agents whose purpose was to raise Mary Stuart to the throne by inciting the people to rebellion or by effecting Elizabeth's assassination or by a Papal or Spanish invasion of the country.⁴⁵ There was a revulsion of feeling after the cruelty of Father Campion's execution, and a pamphlet was published to vindicate the action of the government. His offense was described as an attempt to withdraw the people from their allegiance to Elizabeth and to organize all rebellious subjects who had already been aroused by the seminary priests for the purpose of depriving the Queen of "hir life, crowne, and dignity."⁴⁶ A similar type of pamphlet, *The Execution of Justice in England*, was published after the execution of Somerville. It was an attempt to prove, after a survey of all the supposed plots against Elizabeth, that no man was persecuted for his religion, but that all the punishments were meted out for direct treason against the state. It concluded with an account of the Somerville affair.⁴⁷ In 1584 it was translated into Latin, and the same year an answer, also in Latin, was published on the Continent. This reply, *De Iustitia Britannica, sive Anglica, quae contra Christi Martyres continenter exercetur*, gives a list of all the Catholics who had suffered for their faith, and Mary Stuart's name is foremost among the women.⁴⁸ In the same general category belongs the pamphlet published after the execution of Throckmorton and Parry. The former had openly accused Elizabeth of cruelty, and great pains were taken to claim that Catholics were leniently treated to extenuate the use of torture, and to emphasize his guilt.⁴⁹ The latter said in his confession that he had been furnished with ethical sanction

⁴⁵ Camden, *Hist.*, p. 245, interprets their mission as the preparation for a foreign invasion; Holinshed's *Chronicles* (ed. Ellis, London, 1809, 4. 447) says that their purpose was to encompass Elizabeth's death "against a great daie, set and appointed, when the general hauock should be made, those onlie reserved that ioined with them." This hinted at an English St. Bartholomew.

⁴⁶ See the reprint in Holinshed 4. 457 ff.

⁴⁷ Reprinted in Holinshed 4. 515 ff. The need for this propaganda was rather obvious. Even contemporary gossip blamed Leicester's personal enmity for the execution of Somerville. See Camden, *Hist.*, p. 289.

⁴⁸ Scott, *Bibl.*, p. 44.

⁴⁹ *A Discovery of the Treason Practised by F. Throckmorton*, London, 1584. Reprinted in Holinshed 4. 536-48. There were two editions of this pamphlet in 1584.

for the assassination of Elizabeth.⁵⁰ This pamphlet on Parry was the last important work before the Babington Plot.

With the discovery of the Babington Plot and the subsequent execution of Mary, the fourth phase of the battle of the books reached its climax, and broadsides, proclamations, and pamphlets spread over England and the Continent. The horrible designs of the conspirators limped in such verses as Thomas Nelson's *A Short Discourse*:

First to deprive our gracious Queene,
Religion for to change.
And then for to envade the Realme, by
troopes of foraigne power.
To ouerthrowe the gouernment, and kill
her in her Bower:
Or Forceably to dispossesse, the Queen
of Englands Grace,
And to poclaime the Scottish Queen, and
set her in her place.⁵¹

In Certain Englishe Verses, presented unto the Queenes most excellent Maiestie by a Courtier, Biblical and classical allusions are mingled with true Renaissance abandon. If the plot had succeeded, England would have been left to the mercy of Spain while Phaeton held the reins of misrule seated in Moses's chair. The verses are important because they represent Mary's followers as charmed by the siren songs of Circe, a characterization that is repeated in several other places.⁵² W. Kempe's *A Dutiful Invective against the most haynous Treasons of Ballard and Babington*, which is in the same vein, describes the conspirators as enchanted by the charms of the Scottish Circe whose "Siren songs" had bewitched them into the practice of treason.⁵³

The more serious tracts inspired by the unprecedented trial and condemnation of a foreign Queen made less pretension to

⁵⁰ *A True and Plaine Declaration of the Treasons Practiced by W. Parry*, London, 1585. Reprinted in Holinshed 4. 561 ff. According to Lingard, *History of England*, London, 1823, 8. 220-7, Parry never had any sanction for the assassination of Elizabeth. Dekker used the material from this pamphlet in his play *The Whore of Babylon* (1603).

⁵¹ W. C. Hazlitt, ed. *Fugitive Tracts*, Privately Printed, 1875, vol. 1 (without pagination.)

⁵² *Op. cit.* This subject will be developed in a later article on Acrasia.

⁵³ *Op. cit.*

the realm of literature. Between Mary's conviction and her execution, England was in the wildest state of excitement. The government anxiously awaited reports on the respective attitudes of James and the King of France. The French Ambassador, through his secretary, instigated a plot for the assassination of Elizabeth, but it was discovered at an early stage. Alarming, though improbable, rumors, such as Mary's escape and Elizabeth's death, added to the general excitement.⁵⁴ On every side the case of the Scottish Queen was discussed, and the justice of her sentence disputed. In December, 1586, Elizabeth issued a proclamation of the sentence given against Mary, which declared that her practices had become so dangerous that it was impossible to allow her to live any longer without endangering the state.⁵⁵ It was translated into Dutch the same year. This official paper was the first written defense of the English government. It was followed by a curious little tract, *The Copie of a Letter to the Right Honorable Earle of Leyster* etc., which was practically a reprint of the proceedings of the Parliament. It gives the two petitions made to the Queen for Mary's execution and her replies. Its main purpose is to contrast Mary's crimes with Elizabeth's merciful and fair attitude towards her captive. Puckering's speech in behalf of the Commons gives the familiar characterization of Mary as the source of English discord.⁵⁶ Immediately after Mary's execution two works were written justifying the English government. Richard Crompton's *A Short Declaration of the Ende of Traytors, and false Conspirators against the State* stresses the necessity of strict law enforcement for the preservation of both ruler and state. He gives an account of the number of treasons alleged against Mary, details the manner of her trial, and repeats the arguments advanced against her in Parliament.⁵⁷ The second work, usually attributed to Maurice Kyffin,⁵⁸ *A Defence of the Honorable sentence and*

⁵⁴ Camden, *Hist.*, p. 379. In February a proclamation was issued against seditious rumors.

⁵⁵ Robert Steele, *Bibliotheca Lindesiana; A Catalogue of Tudor and Stuart Proclamations*, Oxford, 1910, 1. 85.

⁵⁶ P. 9.

⁵⁷ Scott, *Bibl.*, No. 140.

⁵⁸ J. P. Collier (*A Bibliographical and Critical Account of the Rarest Books in the English Language*, London, 1860, 3. 252) rejects the theory of Kyffin's authorship.

execution of the Queene of Scots, is a reply to the charge that Mary's execution was without precedent. It draws on history for numerous examples, gives the opinions of various authorities, and emphasizes the supposed legality of the proceedings against her.⁵⁹ In 1588 this book was translated into French.⁶⁰ George Whetstone's *Censure of a Loyal Subject* is another of the works attempting to justify her execution.⁶¹

The reason for these books is not far to seek. The story of Mary Stuart's death flew over Europe, where it was generally regarded as a martyrdom. Whatever may have been the opinion of her life, she died with a nobility that has stirred the emotions of both her friends and enemies even to the present. Numerous accounts of her death were printed, sometimes with touching engravings of her last moments when her head was laid piteously on the block. Including second editions, seven books giving the tragic news were published in Italy within a year. Four such books appeared in Germany. An indication of the feeling in France is given by a little tract, *Discours de la Mort de Tres-haute & tres-illustre Princesse Madame Marie Stourd, Royne d'Eccosse*, which is practically a reprint of the official report by the French Ambassador of the execution. It must have been issued with the sanction, if not the encouragement, of the King and the Queen Mother. Stronger works than these soon appeared. Adam Blackwood's *Martyre de la Royne d'Escosse Dovariere de France* (1587) maintained Mary's innocence and undertook to expose "les mensonges, calomies, & faulses accusations" that were alleged against this "tresuertuous, trespatholic, & tresillustre princesse." In the following year two more editions were brought out that were enlarged by the inclusion of a group of poems that had been published in 1587 under the title *De Jezabelis Angliae Parricidio varii generis Poemata Latina et Gallica*. These poems on Mary's execution handled Elizabeth very severely. Two more editions of the *Martyre* were published in 1589, one of which included an earlier tract, *La Mort de la Royne d'Escosse Douaire de France*. This additional work, which was probably by Blackwood also, contained information about Mary's death which had been gained from her physician. Mary's fortitude

⁵⁹ Scott, *Bibl.*, No. 145.⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, No. 163.⁶¹ See note 70 below.

at her execution is dwelt upon, and an account of her funeral is given. After describing the contents of the work, the title concludes significantly, "d'ou on peut cognoistre la taistre cruaute de l'Heretique Angloys a l' encontre d'une Royne souveraine, Tres-chrestienne & Catholique, Innocents." Elizabeth's attempts to avoid the charge of cruelty in all her dealings with the seminary priests during the eighties and at the trial of and condemnation of Mary could not prevent books like the above from being scattered far and wide over the Continent where they found eager and sympathetic readers. Before it was included in the *Martyre*, this little tract on her death went through three editions. Besides these vernacular works, several Latin treatises appeared. The Bishop of Ross's book on Mary's right and title was translated into Latin and published in 1587. It was also translated into Spanish. The Catholic party sponsored a tract that purported to be the translation of an English work, although no original for it is known. This book, *Mariae Stuartae Scotorum Reginae Principis Catholicae* etc., portrayed Mary as a martyr to her faith who was innocent of the crimes for which she had been executed. A more general work of the same tenor was published at Antwerp, the *Theatrum Crudelitatem Haereticorum Nostri Temporis* (1587). The section devoted to Mary began with an engraving of her execution, and there was an account of her life by R. Verstegan in which Elizabeth was roughly handled and accused of cruelty. The book was so offensive that the English Ambassador complained to the French King, and Verstegan is said to have been imprisoned.⁶²

This brief sketch indicates the major works that appeared in the long controversy over Mary Stuart's claim to the English throne. The original issue was her right to succeed Elizabeth. John Hale's *Declaration of the Succession*, answered by Morgan's *Allegations*, which in turn was answered by the *Allegations against the Surmised Title*, marked the first phase of the struggle. After the Darnley murder and Mary Stuart's flight into England, the main issue was her guilt or innocence. The writings of the Bishop of Ross, of Buchanan, and the Norfolk pamphlet were the main works dealing with the second

⁶² The account of the above books is based on Scott, *Bibl.*, Nos. 137-80. See note 67 below on Verstegan.

phase. The third stage, which was closely linked to the second, was the assertion of her title in preference to Elizabeth's at the time of the Northern Rebellion. The fourth and final issue was openly the religious one. Did Mary fall a victim to the cruel persecutions of the heretic Queen or was she justly condemned for her manifold treasons against the life and country of the Queen who had stood mercifully between her and the execution of justice for nearly sixteen years? The pamphlet following the executions of Campion, Somerville, Throckmorton, and Parry were merely preliminaries to the outburst that inevitably followed the execution of the leader of the Catholic cause in England. From the very beginning of the religious persecutions, Elizabeth made every effort to avoid the charge of cruelty that was made time and again by the Catholics and which became the keynote of the final attack upon her. The English writers parried with broadside, pamphlet, and even epic. The Mary Stuart passages in the *Faerie Queene* must be viewed essentially as part of this controversy.

Spenser grew up in the atmosphere created by the uncertain succession. During his most formative years he saw the fall of Mary Stuart in Scotland, her flight into England, and the ensuing discord that followed her like a handmaid. His patron Leicester was closely linked with the problem of Mary Stuart and the succession through the possibility of a marriage with either Elizabeth or Mary.⁶³ Problems such as these were discussed at Leicester House, probably very cautiously, and possibly Spenser exchanged views with other politically minded young men such as Sidney. Miss Albright has suggested a relationship between Spenser and the Davisons, and the possibility of an exchange of books. In Davison's library were the *Allegations* and the Norfolk pamphlet.⁶⁴ Spenser's treatment

⁶³ Leicester was supposed to have been raised to the earldom and created Baron of Denbigh in order to make him a more suitable match for Mary. Elizabeth is said to have promised her the succession if she would marry him. (Camden, *Hist.*, pp. 67-8.) In 1574 he was said to have contemplated making her an offer of marriage. (J. D. Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity*, London, 1880, pp. 340-1.) In the early part of Elizabeth's reign, his brother-in-law, the Earl of Huntingdon, was advanced as a possible heir to the throne through his descent from the Duke of Clarence. *Leycester's Commonwealth* (1584) accused him of designs to seize the throne for himself, and there was gossip that he would "obtrude some Bastard-son of his for the Queen's natural Issue." (Camden, *Hist.*, pp. 166-7.)

⁶⁴ "The *Faerie Queene* in Masque at the Gray's Inn Revels," *PMLA* 41 (1926).

of Mary Stuart in the characters of Duessa and Radigund shows that he was well acquainted with the problem of her claim to the succession.

III⁶⁵

An analysis of Spenser's attitude toward Mary Stuart in the trial of Duessa (5. 9. 25-50), furnishes a basis for the interpretation of less obvious passages. King James's complaint over the way his mother is handled is a commonplace of Spenser criticism, and the identity of most of the other characters was suggested long ago by Upton and Todd, but the episode has not been related to the written controversy over Mary's execution. Spenser appropriately introduces his defense of the government by alluding to the attacks on Elizabeth. When Arthur and Artegall approach the palace of Mercilla where the trial is about to be held, they see a poet whose tongue is nailed to a post for his foul blasphemies, bold speeches, and lewd poems against the Queen. Over the head of the offender is the title BONFONT with "bon" crossed out and "mal" substituted for it, making the name "Malfont." A. B. Gough has attempted to identify this poet as Ulpian Fulwell, but his evidence is extremely slight.⁶⁶ "Bonfont" might be a translation of "Fulwell," but the satires by this poet on the court of Lady Fortune which apply to Elizabeth and possibly to Leicester have only a remote connection to the subject Spenser is about to discuss, the trial of Mary Stuart. There is nothing in the passages cited by Gough to suggest any relation whatever to Mary or to Elizabeth's treatment of her. Fulwell attacks court life in the conventional way and with a touch of

497-516. See especially p. 512. I cannot agree with Miss Albright (p. 508) that Spenser's attitude toward Mary Stuart needs any special explanation such as his personal feeling toward Davison (p. 516). Her interpretation of Spenser's handling of the Mercilla episode fails to consider the contemporary attitude toward Mary's trial. As the present study will show, Spenser's attitude toward the entire problem is in no way original, but it is merely the poetic expression of the commonplace views of the Protestant English party. See section III below.

⁶⁵ The identity of Duessa furnishes a separate problem in each half of the *Faerie Queene*. I have not found sufficient evidence to contribute anything to the interpretation of Frederic M. Padelford (*Variorum* 1. 465 ff.) and Ray Heffner ("Spenser's Allegory in Book I of the *Faerie Queene*," *SP* 27. 142-61). The discussion here is limited to Books 4 and 5.

⁶⁶ "Who was Spenser's Bon Font?," *MLR* 12 (1927). 140-5.

bitterness that is the mark of failure. Gough offers no evidence that Fulwell was punished for his writings, and the work cited is dated long before the last phase of the battle of the books. A far stronger case could be made out for Richard Verstegan.⁶⁷

After alluding to the writings against Elizabeth, which almost universally accused her of cruelty, Spenser hastens to the defense by portraying her as Mercilla presiding over a court of strict justice. This is the essence of his argument: pity must not prevent the execution of justice. He emphasizes the theme by repeating it twice. In the twenty-fifth stanza he describes Duessa as "a Ladie of great countenance and place" whose nobility is "blotted with condition vile and base," but nevertheless,

Yet in that wretched semblant, she did sure
The peoples great compassion unto here allure.⁶⁸

But the prosecuting attorney accuses her of such heinous crimes that the people are moved rather to loathe than to pity her. Although he makes a general reference to the many knights she has "confounded," the specific charge is treason against Mercilla.

For she whylome (as ye mote yet right well
Remember) had her counsels false conspyred,
With faithlesse *Blandamour* and *Paridell*,
(Both two her paramours, both by her hyred,

⁶⁷ Also known as Rowlands. He was at Oxford while Spenser was at Cambridge. Both young men were interested in antiquities. Verstegan studied English history and Anglo-Saxon, and in 1576 he published a translation of a German antiquarian work, *The Post of the World*. Soon afterwards he moved to Antwerp where he set up as a printer and engraver. Both as a source of antiquarian knowledge and as a printer he might have been "bonfont" to Spenser. Moreover, he was later punished for reviling Elizabeth in the *Theatrum Crudelitatem Hareticorum Nostri Temporis* (1587). Since this work contained a life of Mary which expressly accused Elizabeth of cruelty, a reference to it would be particularly appropriate as an introduction to an account of Elizabeth's mercy in dealing with her rival. I am inclined to believe, however, that Spenser is referring to all the attacks on his Queen rather than to any specific work or person.

⁶⁸ H. S. V. Jones, *A Spenser Handbook*, N. Y., 1930, p. 263, says that "no doubt Spenser was misleading in writing" these two lines. I do not agree with him. Most of the later works in Mary's defense appealed to pity, and the replies to them tried to show that her crimes were beyond forgiveness. This is exactly what Spenser attempts. I believe that his lines are a true indication of public opinion. See *Hatfield MSS* 1. 433.

And both with hope of shadowes vaine inspyred,)
 And with them practiz'd, how for to depryue
Mercilla of her crowne, by her aspyred,
 That she might it unto her selfe deryue.⁶⁹

The reference to these two lovers, who are Duessa's companions in Book 4, definitely links her trial with her former appearance in the preceding book. Her fellow conspirators were "hyred" as well as led by "shadows vaine"; but the plot was discovered before it could be put into execution, and the actors were punished. These phrases seem to indicate that Blandamour and Paridell represent the men involved in the Babington Plot, if they were not its leaders.⁷⁰ Duessa is being tried for her complicity. She has transgressed against Authority, the law of Nations, Religion, the cause of the people, and Justice charges her with breach of laws. All these offenses are against Concord, the virtue of Book 4. The witnesses for the defense bring forth Pity, Womanhood, Noble Birth, Grief, and Danger from Foreign Power. The force of these arguments touches Prince Arthur, and he is inclined to take her part. Here Spenser is referring to the defenders of Mary. He makes their arguments very similar to the appeal made by the Bishop of Ross which is cited above. But the prosecution brings forward Ate, the mother of debate and all dissention,

⁶⁹ *F. Q.* 5. 9. 41.

⁷⁰ Upton identifies Blandamour and Paridell with the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland. The plot, then, would be the Northern Rebellion. "C" (*N. Q.*, ser. 3, 4 (1863). 66) advances the same theory. The main evidence in the text is the reference in *F. Q.* 4. 1. 35, to Paridell as the "hot-spurre youth," which Upton notes is the term applied to young Henry Percy. Todd adds, in his note on the passage, that "hotspur" was in common usage in Spenser's time. It seems to me that the identification is impossible anyway. The rebellion actually materialized, although it did not succeed, Westmorland made his escape, and it did not result in Mary Stuart's condemnation. Blandamour and Paridell are much more likely to the Ballard and Babington. They received money from Philip II, the plot was discovered, the offenders were executed, and it brought Mary to her "sad doome." Spenser may easily be referring, however, to all the plots that centered around Mary Stuart. In the *Whore of Babylon* a number of the conspiracies against Elizabeth's life are referred to, and Paridell represents William Parry. Since Dekker makes Florimel a man, his play cannot be considered as a direct interpretation of Spenser's characters, but it shows that these attempts on Elizabeth's life, such as Parry's, aroused as much, if not more, interest than the Northern Rebellion. At least they were as well remembered. George Carleton's *Thankful Remembrance* (1624) indicates the relative importance of these events to a contemporary.

who exposes all of Duessa's plots and treasons. This is another definite link with Book 4 where Ate and Duessa are companions: it is justice that condemns her, but the sins are against Concord. Then follow the accusations of Murder, Sedition, Incontinence, Adultery, and Impiety which are all sins against Temperance.⁷¹ It was thus that the Commons argued against Mary as early as 1572:

The late Scottish Queen hath heaped up together all the Sins of the Licentious Sons of *David*, Adulteries, Murders, Conspiracies, Treasons, and Blasphemies against God. . . .⁷²

These charges sufficiently establish Duessa's dangerous character, and Mercilla sorrowfully condemns her.

Spenser expressed himself with great clearness. To him Mary Stuart was a woman whose former nobility was sullied with the very worst crimes. She threatened the country with both civil war and foreign invasion; she had plotted against Elizabeth's life and the Protestant religion; she had seduced subjects from their allegiance; and her private life was unspeakably vile; in short, she constituted a national danger, and it was necessary that the claims of justice should supersede Elizabeth's policy of mercy. Thus stated, free from the ornaments of poetry, Spenser's view appears as merely the accepted defense of the English government. It was the argument advanced by the Commons in 1572, and was restated with greater emphasis after Mary's condemnation. The same view can be found in nearly all of the writings against Mary in the last phase of the battle of the books. George Whetstones's *The Censure of a Loyal Subject* furnishes an example that is so apt that it might pass for a comment on the passages in Spenser:

In very truth necessitie hath made the bloody devices of the Scottish Q. so common, as no good subject may justly be forbidden to derive the cause both of foraigne and domestike conspiracies, from her princely heart. Our Sacred Q. Elizabeth's mercy hath many years contended . . . to preserve both the life and honor of this most unkinde queen . . . some zealous members of the church of God, in publique writings did set downe, the danger of her Majesties mercye in Christian policy shewed by many waightie

⁷¹ In *F. Q.* 5. 10. 4, Duessa's fall is described as "wilful;" *i. e.* against reason.

⁷² D'Ewes, p. 209. Cf. p. 204 above.

reasons, that God delivered the Scottish Queen unto the sword of her justice. . . .⁷³

This analysis establishes certain facts and gives leads for further investigation:

- 1) The trial of Duessa (Mary Stuart) is definitely linked with her appearance in Book 4.
- 2) One group of her sins, though previous to the specific charge with which she is accused, is against temperance the virtue of Book 2.
- 3) Spenser's view of Mary's character is in accord with that taken by her enemies.

Duessa's only important appearance in Book 4 is in the first canto, stanzas 17-54. She has "chang'd her former wonted hew" which may signify that falsehood now appears in a new guise in the person of Mary Stuart.⁷⁴ Duessa has brought her companion, Ate, from Hell because she knows her

To be most fit to trouble noble knights,
Which hunt for honor. . . .

This apparition is a political vice who has overthrown "many a public state," and her dwelling at the gates of Hell is decorated with the memorials of ruined countries. Among these is Alexander's empire which, as both the Commons and the Lords had pointed out to Elizabeth,⁷⁵ was destroyed because of uncertainty about the succession. Her ears are filled with "false rumors" and "seditious troubles." Furthermore,

. . . All her studie was and all her thought,
How she might overthrow the things that Concord wrought.

Blandamour and Paridell make up the rest of the ungodly crew, and the latter soon raises his spear against Britomart but is discomfited. The whole picture is very similar to a political allegory written in the form of a masque for the projected meeting of Mary and Elizabeth in 1562. Its purpose was to bring about peace between the two Queens, and the abstract

⁷³ Egerton Brydges, *British Bibliographer*, London, 1810-14, 4. 141-2.

⁷⁴ The reference to her as daughter of the Emperor of the West is limited to Book 1. There seems to be practically no connection between Duessa's appearance in the first and second parts of the *Faerie Queene*.

⁷⁵ D'Ewes, pp. 81, 106.

characters Discord and False Rumor are driven back to Hell.⁷⁶ Between the time of the masque and the second part of the *Faerie Queene*, Mary Stuart had been outstanding as a source of discord: Scotland had fallen into the worst kind of civil anarchy during her reign, and when she fled into England trouble followed her as Ate followed Duessa; the Northern Rebellion, the Norfolk Conspiracy, the Ridolfi Plot, the treasons that centered around Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador, such as Throckmorton's plan for an invasion of England, the negotiations with France, the attempts on Elizabeth's life by Somerville and Parry, and finally the Babington Plot, all these were the result of her position as a rival for Elizabeth's throne, so that Whetstone could say in 1587 that all foreign and domestic conspiracies were derived from her "princely heart." With this historical background, Spenser reverses the process of the masque and portrays Mary Stuart (Duessa) as summoning Discord (Ate) from Hell to trouble the works of Concord, the archtype of government. He emphasizes Ate's political significance by showing the public ruin she has wrought in the past. She is bawd to Duessa, just as civil strife encouraged men to follow Mary Stuart whose only hope rested upon overthrowing the then established order. The preceding section has indicated the attitude toward the succession as the root of English discord. Elizabeth's own poem, written on the situation at the time of the Norfolk Conspiracy, calls Mary the "daughter of debate, that eke Discord doth sow,"⁷⁷ and Spenser characterizes her in the same way. Further evidence for this interpretation is furnished by the trial of Duessa in Book 5, which definitely refers back to her appearance in Book 4, where, with her companions Blandamour, Paridell, and Ate, she is sowing the discord for which she is punished. Ate even appears as a witness against her. I conclude, therefore, that this is "continued allegory," that in both Books 4 and 5 Duessa represents Mary Stuart.⁷⁸

St. Louis University

⁷⁶ Paul Reyher, *Les Masques Anglais (1512-1640)*, Paris, 1909, pp. 125-8. See comment by Greenlaw, *Studies*, p. 91. It is also indicated in the masque that Mary Stuart must have the virtue of temperance if she is to gain the succession.

⁷⁷ Strype, *Annals* 2. 89.

⁷⁸ Paridell's attack on Britomart, then, represents one of Mary's followers vainly trying to overthrow Elizabeth.

VITA

Kerby Neill was born on March 2, 1906, in Washington, D. C., where he received his elementary education through private tutors and at St. Ann's Parochial School. He attended Georgetown Preparatory School, Garret Park, Md., 1921-3, Devitt Preparatory School, Washington, 1923-4, and in the fall of 1924 he entered Georgetown College, where he received his A. B. (cum laude) in 1928. He was a graduate student in the English Department of the Johns Hopkins University from 1928-34 and received the Ph. D. degree there in 1935. He is now instructor in English at St. Louis University.

